COVID-19 VACCINE DISTRIBUTION BEGINS IN PINELLAS TO PROTECT THE MOST VULNERABLE

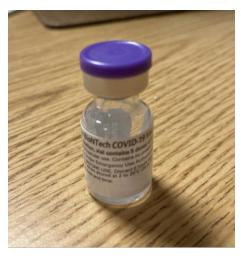


As part of the state's pilot project, some St. Petersburg residents began receiving the first Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines on Dec. 16

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ST. PETERSBURG, FL – Pinellas long-term care residents and staff began receiving COVID-19 vaccines on Dec. 16 as part of the Florida Department of Health's (DOH) mission to protect the most vulnerable in the community.

The first vaccines were provided to long-term care residents and staff and efforts will continue the rest of the week. Among the first to receive the vaccines were a resident, nurse and staff member at Carrington Place of St. Pete, 10501 Roosevelt Blvd., St. Petersburg 33716.

DOH-Pinellas Director Dr. Ulyee Choe and other spokespeople provided information about vaccinations in Pinellas on Dec. 16. Video of the media conference is posted at https://youtu.be/BKBWPcS5p6c. Due to COVID-

19 precautions and the threat of inclement weather, the event was a virtual meeting on Teams.

Pinellas County had been selected as one of two counties in a pilot program to provide the Pfizer-BioNTech immunizations for residents of long-term care facilities (LTCFs) and those who provide their care. Broward County is the other county in the initial distribution of vaccines to protect Florida's most vulnerable residents.

Per the <u>recommendations</u> of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), LTCF residents and health care personnel are included in Phase 1 of the <u>Florida vaccine distribution plan</u>.

The third phase of the vaccine's use in test participants demonstrated it was 95 percent effective in preventing COVID-19 infections 28 days from the first dose. (The second of the vaccine's two doses is given 21 days after the first.)

Vaccines are still not available for mass distribution for the public, but details will be announced as vaccine supplies increase to make them more available

State strike teams are administering the vaccines at all 70 nursing homes in Pinellas. COVID-19 vaccines from other manufacturers will be available for use at later dates as supplies reach the state.

For information about DOH-Pinellas, go to www.PinellasHealth.com or follow us on Twitter @HealthyPinellas. We are also on Nextdoor and Facebook for health messaging.

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